

**TESTIMONY OF
THE HONORABLE DOC HASTINGS (R-WA)
CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
112TH CONGRESS COMMITTEE FUNDING REQUEST
March 2, 2011**

Chairman Lungren, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing my colleague and Ranking Member, Ed Markey and I to appear before you to present the Natural Resources Committee budget for the 112th Congress.

I will briefly summarize what is contained in the Committee's budget proposal.

First, it requests an overall **5% decrease** in the Committee's budget for the 112th Congress as compared to its 111th Congress budget. A real effort was made to identify areas where money can be saved and spending reduced, and there are reductions in virtually every budget category as detailed in the budget submission.

Second, the Committee is allocated 69 staff positions in total. In the 111th Congress, the Committee had nine nonpartisan shared staff positions. The Minority was allotted 1/3 of the remaining 60 staff positions on the Committee, or 20 slots. For the 112th Congress, at the initiative of the Majority, and with agreement from the Minority, the number of nonpartisan shared staff positions has been reduced to six. So, for the 112th Congress, the Minority was allotted 1/3 of the resulting 63 staff positions on the Committee, or 21 slots.

The Minority controls 1/3 of the budget for staff salaries. Majority staff and nonpartisan shared staff are paid from the 2/3 allocation to the Majority. This arrangement has worked well over several Congresses, and we have agreed that it is in the best interest of the Committee to continue this arrangement.

Third, the remainder of the budget, items such as travel and supplies, is treated in an open manner. Computers, copiers and other equipment are repaired or replaced as needed without regard to Majority or Minority affiliation.

Fourth, the budget reflects a slight decrease for travel, although this remains a priority for a Committee that very directly affects communities and economies in particular regions and areas of our nation, and its territories. Many Indian lands and communities most directly affected by federal forests, public lands, and other issues within the Committee's jurisdiction are in very remote parts of the country. Speaker Boehner and the Republican Majority have pledged a more open and transparent House, and it is my view that upholding this pledge means making the Committee accessible to these directly impacted communities. The calendar for the House for this session is also well-designed for these efforts to take the Congress and the Committee directly to the areas of the country affected by the laws, agencies, and Departments under the Committee's jurisdiction.

In conclusion, while Mr. Markey and I may disagree over a fair number of policy matters under our Committee's jurisdiction, I believe we share a common belief that political or policy differences should not be injected into Committee budget and administration matters. The proposal that we have submitted reflects that understanding.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.